

Soviet Navy Rated Above American

LONDON, Aug. 28 (UPI)—The Soviet Union has a numerical edge of more than three to one over the United States in submarines, has more than five times as many cruisers and has started to challenge America's long supremacy in aircraft carriers, the authoritative Jane's Fighting Ships said today in its 1974-75 edition.

The Soviet navy, it said, is "a very powerful fighting force" and "leads the world in seaborne missile armaments, both strategic and tactical, both ship and submarine launched."

The U.S. Navy, slashed "as a matter of direct policy" from 1,000 ships in 1968 to 514 today, "bears a desperately heavy burden," Jane's said.

The breakdown showed that the Soviet navy has a total of 1,062 vessels.

"Of those countries to whom a navy is today essential the United States is one of the foremost, and the U.S. Navy is probably also in the [vanguard] of navies subjected to misinformed, illogical and irrational attacks by some of those who depend upon it most," it added.

Jane's said China now has 51 submarines—seven more than a year ago and at least one of them nuclear—and the world's largest fleet of light forces.

"The present Chinese fleet may well be only the forerunner of one of the world's greatest navies of the near future," it said.

Jane's said the Soviets have 131 nuclear vessels and 266 "conventionally" powered

craft. It said these include one or two new 8,000-ton "Delta" class ballistic-missile nuclear submarines, packing 16 missiles each, with a range of 4,200 nautical miles "giving them a capability of covering the whole of North America and the rest of NATO without the parent submarine leaving the Norwegian Sea."

U.S. submarine strength, Jane's said, is 102 nuclear submarines in service with 23 building. It said conventionally powered submarines total only 15, with three in reserve.

The U.S. Navy, according to Jane's, currently has six cruisers in service, compared with the Soviet Union's 34.

It listed the total of American frigates, destroyers and escorts at 196, and 102 for the Soviets.

The United States, Jane's said, still has a clear lead in aircraft carriers, with 14 in active service, five in reserve and three nuclear carriers building. But it said that the Soviets' first 40,000-ton carrier, Kiev, is now fitting out at Nikolaev on the Black Sea and a sister ship, Minsk, is being built in the same yard.